Sixth Book
of the
History of La Florida,
by the Inca

It contains the election of the Captains for the voyage; the multitude of canoes that opposed the Spaniards; the order and manner of their fighting, which lasted eleven days without ceasing; the death of forty-eight Castilians because of the rashness of one of them; the return of the Indians to their homes; the arrival of the Spaniards at the Sea; an encounter they had with the people of the coast; the events of their fifty-five days of navigation until they reached Pánuco; the many quarrels that they had there among themselves, and the reason for them; the good reception that the imperial City of México gave them; and how they were scattered through various parts of the World.
It contains twenty-two chapters.

I

THEY CHOOSE CAPTAINS FOR THEIR CARAVELS, AND THE SPANIARDS EMBARK ON THEIR VOYAGE

Luis de Moscoso de Alvarado embarked on the caravel that served as flagship, being governor and captain-general of them all, as he was on land. Juan de Alvarado and Cristóbal Mosquera, the governor's brothers, were captains of the vice-admiral. They called these two brigantines or caravels by the names of flagship and vice-admiral; the others they called simply the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh. The accountant Juan de Añasco and the factor Biedma were captains of the third caravel. Captain Juan de Guzmán and the treasurer Juan Gaytán were captains of the fourth brigantine; Captains Arias Tinoco and Alonso Romo de Cardeñosa, of the fifth. Pedro Calderón and Francisco Osorio were captains of the sixth brigantine. Juan de Vega, a native of Badajoz who has been mentioned on other occasions, and García Osorio embarked in the seventh and last caravel as its captains. All these gentlemen were of noble blood and famous for their exploits, and had conducted themselves accordingly in the incidents of this journey and discovery. Two captains were named for each brigantine so that, when one might go ashore for some purpose, the other could remain in the caravel to manage it.

Under the command and direction of the captains just named, there embarked with them 350 Spaniards, rather less than more, nearly a thousand having entered that land. As many as twenty-five or thirty Indians, men and women, embarked with them, having been brought in their service from distant countries. They alone had escaped from the sickness and death that they had experienced during the past winter. All the rest of the more than eight hundred had died, and these thirty embarked and went with the Spaniards because they did not wish to stay with Guachoya or Anilco, because of the love they had for their masters. They said they preferred dying with them to living in foreign lands, and the Spaniards did not force them to remain, for it seemed very ungrateful and not in accordance with the love the Indians showed for them, as well as a great cruelty to abandon them so far from their homes.

On the same day of the Apostles—a day of such solemnity and gladness for all Christendom, though sad and lamentable for these Castilians because of the momentous thing that they did on it, which was to abandon and give

up for lost all the fruits of the many labors that they had undergone in that land, and the reward and recompense for the great exploits that they had performed—they set sail, at sunset. They navigated by sail and oar all that night and the following day and night without any molestation from the enemy.

Each brigantine had seven oars to a side, with which all those who were in the boat rowed by turns for their assigned time, without excepting anyone unless it were the captains. The distance by the river that our Spaniards navigated during the two nights and the day was understood to coincide with the district and limits of the province of Guachoya, which as we mentioned above extended down the river. Inasmuch as Guachoya had shown himself to be a friend of the Spaniards, the Indians had not wished to attack them while they were traveling within his territory. Or perhaps it was due to some superstition and observance connected with the crescent or waning moon, which was near its conjunction, such as the Germans had, as Julius Caesar writes in his *Commentaries*. The exact reason they did not pursue them those first two nights and day is not known.

But on the second day there arrived at dawn a most handsome fleet of more than a thousand canoes, which the curacas of the league had assembled against the Spaniards. Because those of this Río Grande were the largest and finest that our people saw in the whole of La Florida, it will be well to give here a particular description of them, since from now on we shall have battles on the water to describe, rather than those on land.

II

DIFFERENT KINDS OF RAFTS THAT THE INDIANS MADE FOR CROSSING RIVERS

In the language of the Indians of the island of Española and its vicinity a *canoa*[43] is the same thing as a bark or small caravel without a deck. They call them all by the same name unless it is in the Río Grande of Cartagena, where, because they are larger, they call them pirogues. The Indians of every part of the New World, particularly in the islands and maritime countries, make them large or small according to the materials they have at hand. They

[43]From the Arawakan word *canoa*, borrowed by the Spaniards, comes the English "canoe."

seek the thickest trees they can find, shape them like a trough, and make them all in one piece, because their invention does not extend to making a boat with planks nailed to its ribs, one above the other. Neither do they have iron, nor know how to make nails; much less do they have forges, or understand caulking, or seeking pitch or tow, or making sails, rigging, cables, anchors, and the many other things that are necessary for the construction of ships. They only make use of what nature (in the things their own ingenuity does not attain) points out to them with her finger. Thus for crossing rivers and navigating the sea, the little that they do navigate it, where they do not find timber as large as is required for canoes (that is, throughout El Perú and its coast), they make rafts of a light wood similar to that of fig trees, which the Indians say grows in the provinces near Quito. They take it from there by order of the Incas to all the large rivers of El Perú, and they make the rafts of five logs joined together. The log in the center is longer than the others, the first two on either side are somewhat shorter, and the second two shorter still, for they can go through the water better thus than with the front [of the raft] entirely even. I crossed on some of them that were still in use from the time of the Incas.

They also make them of a thick bundle of reeds as large as the body of a horse, the bundle being tied very firmly and tapered to a sharp point projecting upward in front like the prow of a bark, so that it will cut the water. In the back it has a breadth of two tercias. On the upper part of the bundle of reeds they make a flat space or small platform where they put the cargo or the man who is to cross over the river. They charge him very strictly that he is by no means to move from the position in which they place him on the raft, secured by its fastenings, nor to raise his head from where it is placed face down on the raft, nor even to open his eyes to look at anything.

Once when I was crossing a large and swift river in this manner (it is on such rivers that the Indians caution their passengers as told above, rather than on the small and gently flowing streams, with which they do not concern themselves), because of the excessive warnings that the Indian boatman gave me not to open my eyes—for I being a boy he tried to make me fear that the earth would sink in or the heavens fall—I had an irresistible desire to look and see whether I could catch sight of some enchantment or something from the other life, and thus when I felt that we were in the middle of the river I raised my head a little and looked up at the water. And indeed it seemed to me that we were falling down from the sky, which was because of giddiness caused by the exceedingly swift current of the river and because of the fury with which the raft was cutting through the water, going with the

current. It forced me to close my eyes and confess that the Indians are right in ordering that they shall not be opened. Only one Indian goes on each of these reed rafts. In order to navigate it, he bestrides the extreme end of the stern and, throwing himself on his chest on the raft, he paddles with both hands and feet and guides the raft along with the current until he puts it across the river. In other places they make rafts of matted calabashes fastened together until they form a flat surface a vara and a half square, more or less. In front they fasten a sort of breast-strap like that on a horse's saddle through which the Indian boatman puts his head and begins to swim, carrying the raft and its cargo above him until he crosses the river, bay, creek, or arm of the sea. If necessary he has one or two Indians go behind to help him, who swim and push the raft.

In other places where the rivers do not permit navigation because of their strong and furious currents, and where there are no places to embark and disembark because of the many rocks and cliffs and the absence of beaches, they run a thick cable from one side of the river to the other and fasten it to large trees or strong projecting rocks. A large basket with a wooden handle the size of one's arm runs back and forth on this cable. It has a capacity of three or four persons and carries two ropes, one on either side. They pull the basket with these to draw it from one side of the river to the other. As the cable is long and has a large curve or drop in the center, it is necessary to release the basket a little at a time, lowering it to the middle of the cable, and then to pull it up by main strength along the other half from the other side. There are Indians for this purpose, whose business it is to take travelers across, and those who go in the basket help lower and raise it by catching hold of the cable. I remember having crossed by this means two or three times, as a boy less than ten years old, and on the roads the Indians carried me on their backs. The Indians take their cattle across by this method, with much labor, for they hobble them and put them into the basket. They do the same with the smaller animals from Spain, such as sheep, goats, and hogs, but the large animals, such as horses, mules, asses, and cows, because of their strength and weight, are not carried in the baskets. They take them over other crossings such as bridges or fords. This method of crossing by the cable and basket is only for people on foot, and it is not found on the main highways, but on the private ones that the Indians have between their pueblos.

These are the methods of crossing rivers that the Indians have in El Perú, in addition to the bridges that they make of willows and reeds or rushes, as we shall tell in the appropriate place, if God is pleased to give us life.

But throughout the land of La Florida that our Spaniards traversed, because of the great abundance of large trees there suitable for canoes, the Indians do not use any other means of crossing the rivers except these, though as we have seen the Spaniards made rafts at certain places.

III

THE SIZE OF THE CANOES AND THE OSTENTATION AND ORDER THE INDIANS OBSERVED WITH THEM

Returning, then, to the subject of our *History*, we said that among the many canoes that were found to be following the Spaniards at dawn on the second day of their navigation, some extraordinarily large ones were seen that caused amazement. Those that were flagships and others similar to them were so large that they had as many as twenty-five oars per side, and in addition to the oarsmen, they carried twenty-five or thirty warriors, stationed in their order from bow to stern. Thus there were many canoes with a capacity of seventy-five or eighty men, who went in them placed in such manner that they could all fight without getting in one another's way. The oarsmen also took their bows and arrows in the canoes for munitions. These [canoes], even though so large, are made in a single piece, and it is to be noted that there are such fine trees in that country.

From these largest ones that we have mentioned, the size of the canoes diminished down to the small ones that had fourteen oars to a side, there being none in this fleet smaller than these. The oars usually are a fathom long, rather more than less, and the blades of the oars are three handbreadths long and a tercia in width. They are made all in one piece and are so smooth and highly polished that even horsemen's lances could not be more so. When one of these canoes goes with all hands rowing hard it is so swift that a horse running full speed hardly has the advantage of it.

For rowing evenly and in time, those Indians have made up various songs with different tunes, quick or slow, according to their speed or slowness in rowing. The themes of these songs are the exploits their ancestors or other foreign captains have performed in war, with whose memory and recollection they are incited to battle and to triumph and victory therein.

There is another remarkable and unusual peculiarity to tell concerning the canoes that were flagships of this fleet and those which belonged to the rich

and powerful men. This is that each one individually was painted inside and out, even to the oars, with a single color, as for example blue, or yellow, white, red, green, rose, violet, black, or some other color, if there are any more than those mentioned. This was in accordance with the blazon or the fancy of the captain or curaca or rich and powerful man to whom the canoe belonged. Not only the canoes, but also the oarsmen and their oars, and the soldiers, down to the plumes and the skeins of thread that they wore wound about their foreheads as a headdress, and even their bows and arrows, were all tinted with this one color, without the admixture of any other. Even bands of horsemen who intended to take part in a tournament with reed spears could not have come out more meticulously arrayed than these Indians came in their canoes. As they came in such numbers and with so many different colors, and maintained such good order and arrangement, and as the river was very wide and they could spread out in every direction without disturbing their order, they presented a most beautiful sight to the eye.

In this grand and imposing manner the Indians followed the Spaniards on the second day until noon, without molesting them in any way, so that they could thus see and enjoy better the sight of their handsome and powerful fleet. They followed behind them rowing to the sound of their songs, and among other things that they said (according to the interpretation of the Indians whom the Spaniards had with them) was to praise and aggrandize their own strength and bravery and to condemn the weakness and cowardice of the Castilians. They said that now the cowards were fleeing from their arms and forces, and that the thieves feared their justice, and that it would do them no good to flee from the country, for all of them would soon die in the water; and that, if they would soon be food for birds and dogs on land, in the river they would make them food for the fishes and marine animals, and thus their iniquities and the vexation that they were giving the whole world would be ended. They came saying these and other similar things, and they rowed to the sound of them. At the end of every song they raised a great shout and outcry.

IV

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE INDIANS FOUGHT THE SPANIARDS WHILE DESCENDING THE RIVER

The Indians, having examined the Spaniards' fleet, small in number but great in quality and force, followed it until noon without molesting it in any way; after that hour the canoes divided into three equal parts, forming a vanguard, a center, and a rear guard. Among those in advance in the first party went the canoes of the curaca Quigualtanqui, captain-general of the leagues of the caciques on water and on land. It was not known for certain whether he himself came in one of them, but in the songs they sang and in the other shouts they gave the Indians called out his name very distinctly.

The canoes, divided into three groups, all followed the right bank of the river, going downstream. Those in the vanguard, forming a long and narrow squadron, advanced upon the Castilians' caravels, not for the purpose of attacking them, but in order to pass in front of them, leaving them to their left, so as to be able to discharge arrows at them more advantageously. Thus they crossed the river obliquely from one bank to the other and sent a shower of arrows upon the caravels, in such quantities that the boats were covered with them from top to bottom, and many Spaniards were wounded, the oblong and round shields they carried proving to afford them little protection.

The first canoes, having passed and reached the left bank of the river, immediately went ahead to the right to resume their former position. Meanwhile the canoes of the second division engaged the brigantines in the same order that the first ones had done, and having discharged their arrows and reached the left bank, they immediately returned to the right and took up their position ahead of the first canoes.

The canoes of the second squadron had scarcely finished passing by the brigantines when those of the third attacked in the same manner and order as the others. After discharging another shower of arrows, they went back to the right bank and placed themselves in front of the second squadron.

As the caravels did not cease navigating (though the Indians were molesting them), they now reached the place where the first canoes were. The latter, seeing them in a good position, attacked them a second time, repeating their first performance; then the second and third divisions did the same

thing, always returning to their position at the right bank after discharging their arrows.

In this manner, as if in a very well-executed tournament with reed spears, advancing to discharge their arrows and then falling back to their positions, the Indians pursued the Castilians that whole day, not allowing them to rest a moment. At night they did the same, though not as continuously as during the day, for they contented themselves with making only two assaults, one during the first watch and the other just before dawn.

When the Indians first attacked them, the Spaniards, notwithstanding that they had the canoes that were carrying the horses fastened behind [their boats], stationed men in them to defend them, believing that the fighting would be hand to hand. Seeing, however, that they could do no good because the enemy would not come within reach of their swords but wounded them with arrows from a distance, and seeing that the Christians who were in the canoes were being badly injured because of their exposed position, they took them back into the brigantines, leaving the horses with the poor defense of the large shields and the shelters they had made for them with the skins of animals.

This same battle and strife the Indians had with the Spaniards on the first day and night proceeded continuously for ten days and nights with no change or innovation whatever. We shall not write of them in detail in order to avoid tediousness, and also because nothing extraordinary took place other than the things described in connection with the first day. It must be told only that during this time they killed almost all the horses with arrows, no more than eight remaining, which happened to be better protected.

Though all of them were wounded, not one escaping, the Spaniards defended themselves from the Indians with their oblong and round shields, and fired upon them with some crossbows they carried. They had used up all the harquebuses in making nails for the brigantines, because aside from the fact that their need of iron forced them to do so, they had been of little use throughout this expedition and discovery because of the little practice and experience that our harquebusiers then had. To this were added the poor facilities they had for making powder after the battle of Mauvila, because the supply they had brought was burned there. For these reasons the Indians not only had not feared the harquebuses but were contemptuous and made fun of them. Therefore our people did not bring them.

V

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE ELEVENTH DAY OF THE SPANIARDS' NAVIGATION

After the ten days of continuous warfare and fighting that the Indians had with the Spaniards, they desisted from it and withdrew their canoes a little more than half a league from the brigantines. Our people passed on, proceeding with their voyage, and saw near the riverbank a small pueblo of some eighty houses. As it appeared that the Indians had now left them and that they ought already to be near the sea, because they believed that they had traveled more than two hundred leagues during those days, as they had always navigated with both sails and oars (though contending with the enemy) and the river made no turns that would have detained them, they thus desired to provide themselves with food for the sea voyage. Word was sent to all the brigantines that all those who wished to go to the pueblo for maize should go with the commander who had been chosen.

A hundred soldiers went ashore and took the eight horses that remained so that they might rest and recover themselves and be ready for fighting if the necessity arose.

The Indians of the pueblo, seeing that the Spaniards were coming to it, abandoned it and raised the alarm, calling for help with many shouts and outcries and fleeing through the fields. Our men reached the houses after a hasty march. They were about two harquebus-shots from the river, and they found in them much maize, an abundance of several kinds of dried fruit, a large quantity of white deerskins and also some tinted in all colors, and many mantles made of different kinds of skins very well dressed. Among the latter they found a strip of extremely fine marten-skins eight varas long and four tercias wide. It was folded crosswise, making it double-faced and about the width of silk. It was decorated all over at intervals with strings of pearls and seed pearls, each one a separate tuft made like a tassel and placed in a regular design. It was believed to be a standard or some insignia used in their festivals, celebrations, and dances, because it was not suitable for personal adornment nor for a bed or a dwelling. Gonzalo Silvestre took this piece, he being the commander of those who went ashore, and with it and all the maize, fruit, and deerskins that they could carry on their backs they hurriedly returned to the brigantines, from which the trumpets had been summoning them very insistently. At the shout raised by the Indians of the

pueblo, calling for help, both those in the canoes and those in the fields had come running to their assistance, and as there were few of them ashore, many had come from the canoes to join them and strengthen their forces and spirits for the battle.

Thus the enemy came up with great impetus and ferocity, by water and by land, to defend the pueblo and attack the Spaniards. The latter embarked in their canoes as hastily as they had gone ashore, and in their hurry to reach the brigantines they were forced to abandon the horses, because the swiftness and fury of the Indians made it impossible to embark them without all of them being cut off and killed. They were in such danger that, if the Indians on the river or on the shore had advanced a hundred paces more, none of them would have been able to embark in the brigantines, but God succored them and saved them from death that day.

Seeing that the Spaniards had reached safety, the enemy turned their fury against the horses they had left on land. Taking off their headstalls and halters so that they would not prevent their running, and the saddles so that they would not protect them from arrows, they turned them into the fields and then, as if they were deer, they shot arrows at them until they saw that they were down, with extreme joy and satisfaction.

Thus on this day the last of the horses perished that had entered La Florida for its discovery and conquest. They had numbered 350, and on none of the expeditions that have been made to the New World up to the present have so many and such good horses been seen together.

On seeing their horses killed when they were unable to help them, the Castilians felt the greatest grief and wept for them as if they had been their children. But seeing themselves saved from a similar fate, they gave thanks to God and proceeded on their voyage. This happened on the twelfth day of their navigation.

VI

THE INDIANS ALMOST CAPTURE A CARAVEL, AND THE MAD ACTION OF A RECKLESS SPANIARD

The Indians, having found out that however they might pursue the Spaniards they did not accomplish what they desired, which was to kill all of them, but on the contrary caused them to navigate in better order and con-

cert, without separating from one another, made use of a stratagem of war. This was that they drew off from the brigantines or caravels in the hope that they would become careless and separate from each other, thus giving an opportunity of destroying them when they were divided. With this scheme they stayed upstream, letting it be understood that they were leaving the caravels alone; the latter were then sailing with a favorable wind. Proceeding thus with their voyage, one of them separated from the others, without any reason whatsoever, and fell out of the order in which all of them were sailing, remaining less than a hundred paces behind.

The Indians, seeing that their strategy and cunning were not without result, did not want to lose the occasion that was offered them, and thus they advanced swiftly upon the caravel from all directions and came alongside to subdue and capture it by main force.

The other six that were going on ahead, on noting the carelessness of their companion, lowered their sails and rowed back as fast as possible to its aid. Though the distance was short, since it was against the current of the river they ascended with much difficulty and labor, and when they reached the brigantine they found the Castilians who were in it so hard-pressed by this deluge of Indians that had fallen upon them that they were defending themselves with their swords. They could not get to all the places where they were needed, by which the enemies were entering the caravel. Some of them were already in it and many others had hold of it, but upon the arrival of our men they withdrew to a distance, taking with them the canoe that was fastened to the caravel's stern, containing five of the pigs they had reserved for breeding if they should make a settlement somewhere. This is what happened on the thirteenth day of the Spaniards' navigation. Attributing it to the mercy of God that they had not lost the caravel, they gathered themselves together and cautioned one another anew that all of them be careful not to fall behind or get out of order, so as not to incur another such attack and danger. Thus they navigated two more days, and the Indians always came less than a quarter of a league behind them, waiting for our people to commit some other imprudence in order to take advantage of it.

Our Spaniards navigated very cautiously and vigilantly, seeing how alert the Indians were not to lose an occasion for attacking them. But all the care they took was not enough, because on the sixteenth day of their voyage a misfortune and loss took place that caused much grief and sadness. It was even more lamentable in that the cause was foolish and absurd and not occasioned by any danger that forced or impelled them to risk the lives of forty-eight of the best and bravest men in the fleet, who were lost [on this occa-

sion]. But there is no authority that can prevent the foolish actions of a reckless person, because a madman can destroy more than what a hundred sensible ones can build up. So that the misfortune of our people may be better understood, permit me to tell it fully as it happened, and to tell who was the cause of so much trouble and damage.

Among the Spaniards in this fleet there was one named Esteban Añez, a rustic who was a native of Villanueva de Barcarrota. He had brought to La Florida a horse that though of crude proportions was strong and stout, for which reason, or more probably because no arrows struck him in a vital spot, he had served until the end of the expedition and was one of the few that the Castilians embarked in the brigantines for the voyage of which we are telling.

Inasmuch as Esteban Añez, then, had always traveled on horseback and had taken part in many of their past dangers, though he had done nothing notable in the course of them, he had won and maintained a reputation for bravery. With this, helped along by his rustic and ordinary nature, he had become presumptuous and foolish. As proof of his madness he left his caravel and got into the canoe that it carried at the stern, saying that he was going to talk to the governor, who was ahead. Five other Spaniards went with him, whom he had deceived by telling that all six of them were to perform an exploit that would be the most famous and notable of all those that had taken place on the whole discovery. They were easily persuaded because they were all young, and among them was a gentleman twenty years old, a natural son of Don Carlos Enríquez, who died in the battle of Mauvila. He had the same name as his father and was of as graceful person and handsome face as it was possible for a human being to be. Even at this early age he had shown himself both in skill with arms and in the virtues of his life and habits to be a worthy son of such a father. Ambitious to win the honor that Esteban Añez promised them, this gentleman and four others entered the canoe, and under pretext of going to talk with the governor they left the caravel. When they were at a distance from it they charged toward the Indians, shouting loudly: "Toward them, for they are fleeing!"

The governor and the other captains of the caravels, on seeing the foolish thing that these six Spaniards were doing, hastily ordered the trumpeters to sound the assembly and shouted and made signs to them to watch out for the danger into which they were going, telling them to return to their caravel. But the more our men shouted to him the more Esteban Añez persisted in his rash madness and refused to come back. On the other hand he signaled for all the caravels to follow him.

Seeing this madman's disobedience, the governor ordered that thirty or forty Spaniards go after him in the canoes that the brigantines carried at their sterns, with the determination to order him hanged as soon as they should bring him back. But it would have been better to have left him to the Indians for punishment, who would have cured his madness, as they did, and not to send many others to their deaths to be lost for one who was lost already.

VII

THE INDIANS KILL FORTY-EIGHT SPANIARDS BECAUSE OF THE IMPRUDENCE OF ONE OF THEM

In response to the governor's commands, forty-six Spaniards quickly jumped into their canoes to bring back Esteban Añez. One of them was Captain Juan de Guzmán, who was very fond of going in a canoe and managing it himself. Although all the soldiers in his caravel begged him to stay, he would not consent to do so but was angered by their importunities, especially by those of Gonzalo Silvestre, who, as his best friend, was the one who most opposed his going and offered to go in his place. He replied angrily, saying: "You have always opposed and now oppose my liking for traveling by canoe, prophesying some misfortune for me in doing so. Well, for that [reason] only I must go, and you are to stay, for I do not wish you to go with me." So saying, he jumped into the canoe, and another gentleman from Badajoz, named Juan de Vega, the first cousin of the Juan de Vega who was captain of one of the caravels, and a great friend of Juan de Guzmán, followed him.

The Indians had constantly followed the caravels with their canoes formed into a squadron, there being so many of them that they covered the river from one bank to the other, and for a quarter of a league back the water could not be seen. Seeing the first canoe of Esteban Añez, which was going toward them, and the three that followed behind it, they did not go on from where they were, but on the contrary they all rowed backward very smoothly and in good order so as to separate the Spanish canoes from their brigantines. The latter having lowered their sails, they struggled with their oars very laboriously, as they were going against the current, to reach their canoes in order to assist them.

Esteban Añez, blind in his recklessness, on seeing the Indians rowing

backward, instead of becoming cautious was made even more daring and pushed on in his canoe to overtake the enemy. He shouted louder than ever, saying : "They are fleeing, they are fleeing, toward them, for they are fleeing!" He thus obliged the other three canoes that were coming after him to hurry more in order to detain or assist him if they could.

Seeing the Castilians near them, the enemy parted their squadron in the form of a new moon, always rowing backward, to induce and make way for the Christians to enter and get between them. When they saw that they were now so far in that they could not withdraw again even if they wished to do so, the canoes on the right wing closed in and attacked the four of the Christians with such impetus and fury that, taking them broadside, they capsized them and threw everyone in them into the water. As such a multitude of canoes was passing over them all the Spaniards were drowned, and if one happened to appear swimming they killed him with arrows and blows on the head with the oars.

In this manner, forty-eight of the Spaniards who had gone in the four canoes perished miserably that day without being able to make any defense; of the fifty-two who went, only four escaped. One was Pedro Morón, a mestizo and a native of the island of Cuba, whom we mentioned above, and an expert swimmer and very skillful in rowing and managing a canoe, as a person who was born and bred in them. Though he had fallen into the water, his skill and strength enabled him to recover his canoe and escape in it, taking with him three others, among them a most valiant soldier named Alvaro Nieto (of whom we said at the beginning of the expedition that he was on the point of killing the interpreter Juan Ortiz by mistake, having gone for him to the pueblo of Mucoço with Captain Baltasar de Gallegos). Finding himself in his present danger, like the good soldier that he was he fought alone in his canoe (after a manner of speaking) against the whole Indian fleet, in imitation of the famous Horatio at the bridge and of the valiant centurion Sceva in Dirachio, and detained the enemy while Pedro Morón managed the canoe, to bring it to safety. But the strength and valor of the one and the diligence and skill of the others would have availed them nothing if they had not found near them the caravel of the brave Captain Juan de Guzmán. Inasmuch as its captain had gone to the skirmish, this boat had made greater efforts in rowing than the rest in order to assist him if they could, because of his soldiers' affection for him. Thus it went in advance of all the others and was able to rescue and save the lives of the two valiant companions Pedro Morón and Alvaro Nieto, who had many wounds,

though they were not mortal, and they saved two other Spaniards with them.

That caravel also picked up poor Juan Terrón, concerning whom was told above the story of his contempt for the fine pearls he was carrying. He managed to reach the caravel by swimming, but he expired by the side of it before he could get aboard in the arms of those who had given him their hands to lift him up. He had more than fifty arrows driven into his head, face, neck, shoulders, and back.

Juan Coles says that almost sixty men took part in this disastrous exploit and died therein along with Captain Juan de Guzmán, and that he himself was in one of the three canoes. He says that it was forty-odd feet in length and more than four feet across, and he says that he escaped with two arrow wounds that passed through the coat of mail he was wearing. All these are his own words.

This was the sad and costly result, for him and his companions, of the vain arrogance and presumption of Esteban Añez, who considered himself a brave man. It caused the useless and unfortunate death of forty-eight Spaniards who were better than he, most of them being nobles and in fact braver men than he was, and being such they had offered to succor a madman.

The governor gathered up his caravels as best he could and, placing them in order, resumed his voyage, much grieved over the loss of his men.

All the most notable events that we have told about the navigation of these seven brigantines Alonso de Carmona mentions in his *Peregrination*. He speaks particularly of the danger that we mentioned of one of the brigantines being lost; and adds that the Indians had gained everything up to the deck at the stern, and that on driving them away from the brigantine with the reinforcements, they stabbed thirty of them to death, and that the rest jumped into the water and were picked up by the canoes. He tells how they abandoned the horses because of their haste in embarking. He recounts the death of Captain Juan de Guzmán and that of Juan Terrón, saying that it occurred aboard the caravel, though he does not name him. He says, finally, that [the Indians] followed them until they reached the sea.

I am glad to present these two eyewitnesses whenever they give me occasion to do so in their accounts, because they took part in this same expedition. Each one tells in his account little more than what I have said and shall say about them, because they wrote very briefly concerning only the most notable things that they experienced and could remember, and thus in all the many instances that I do not mention them it is because they have not a word to say.

VIII

THE INDIANS RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AND THE SPANIARDS NAVIGATE UNTIL THEY COME IN SIGHT OF THE SEA

After this good stroke that they delivered to their own advantage, which was on the sixteenth day of the Spaniards' navigation, the Indians followed them all that day and the next night, constantly shouting and clamoring at them as if triumphing over them because of their victorious exploit. On the seventeenth day, when the sun rose, they worshiped it with a solemn salutation consisting of a great shouting and outcry and the music of trumpets, drums, fifes, shells, and other noise-making instruments. Having given thanks to the Sun as their god for the victory that they had won over their enemies, they withdrew and returned to their own country, as it seemed to them that they had gone very far away from it. It was believed that they had followed and pursued our Spaniards four hundred leagues down the river with the continuous fighting and assaults that they gave them day and night. In their songs and at other times and in their shouts and outcries, they always called the name of their captain-general Quigualtanqui and never of any other cacique, as if they were saying that that great prince was the only one who was waging all that war. Therefore when the Spaniards afterward reached México and made a report to Don Antonio de Mendoza, who was then viceroy of that kingdom, and to his son Don Francisco de Mendoza, who was afterward generalissimo of the Spanish galleys, giving them an account of the events of this unhappy discovery, and particularly when they told of the perils through which they had passed on this Río Grande and the terrible persecution that his people had given them in the name of that famous Indian, Don Francisco de Mendoza always said to them jokingly, though sententiously, during these conversations and elsewhere, whenever he happened to meet any captain or soldier of importance: "Truly, gentlemen, Quigualtanqui must have been quite a man." This saying recalled anew this Indian's exploits and perpetuated his name.

When they saw that the Indians had left them, our Spaniards understood that they were already near the sea and that this was the reason the Indians had withdrawn and returned to their homes. At that place the river was now so wide that, from its center, land could not be seen on either side. Only

some very tall rushes were visible, which resembled forests of large trees and in fact were so.

At that place the river was more than fifteen leagues wide, as well as could be judged from the sight of it, and for all this our men did not dare approach its banks or leave the center of the channel for fear of striking some marshes or sandbanks where they might be lost. They did not know whether they were now in the sea or whether they were still sailing on the river.

They navigated in this uncertainty for three days with sail and oar, having a favorable wind, these being the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth days of their navigation. At dawn on the twentieth day they saw clearly that they were at sea. On their left as they went they saw extremely large amounts of driftwood, which the river carried to the sea with its floods. It was heaped up in such a manner that it looked like a large island.

Half a league beyond the driftwood was an uninhabited island, which our people judged would be the one that large rivers ordinarily form when they enter the sea, and this proved that they were now in it. Since they did not know what place it was or how far it might be from there to a Christian country, they decided to inspect their brigantines or caravels before entering the sea. Thus they busied themselves with unloading them, and put their cargoes on the driftwood island, in order to careen them if it were necessary or to examine the seams to see whether they needed repairs. They also butchered nine or ten hogs that were still alive. They spent three days doing these things, though it is true that they spent them more in resting from their past hardships and gaining vigor and strength for the future than in working on the caravels, because there was very little to do to them. Our Castilians' greatest need was for sleep, for because of the continuous vigil that the Indians had forced them to keep day and night they were overcome with drowsiness, and thus they slept during those three days like dead men.

It is impossible to say exactly the number of leagues that our Spaniards navigated down the river in the nineteen full days and one additional night that their voyage to the sea lasted, to the place where they then were, because their continuous fighting with the Indians left them no time for calculating the number of leagues that they navigated. But when they found themselves free of the enemy they at once discussed it among themselves, and later in México in the presence of persons who had experience in navigating the sea and rivers. There were many opinions and assertions, because some said that in a day and a night they traveled twenty leagues, others thirty, others forty, and others more or less. But most of them finally agreed to assign twenty-

five leagues to each day and night, because they always navigated with both sails and oars, and the wind never failed them nor did the river have turns that would have detained them.

According to this calculation, our Spaniards found that they had navigated from the place where they embarked to the sea a little less than five hundred leagues. In making this calculation everyone can use his own judgment and assign the number of leagues that he may see fit, noting beforehand that besides the help they had from the wind our men did what they could with the oars in order to pass on and leave the land of enemies who were so anxious to kill them.

Juan Coles says that they went seven hundred leagues, and he must have had the opinion of those who assigned thirty-five leagues of navigation to each twenty-four hours.

IX

THE NUMBER OF LEAGUES THAT THE SPANIARDS PENETRATED INTO THE INTERIOR

There will be some who will be amazed to see that our Spaniards advanced so far into the interior country as has been said, and perhaps they will doubt it. We say to them not to wonder at it, for they went much farther, because they arrived at the very sources of this Río Grande. Where they embarked afterward in the province of Aminoya, near that of Guachoya, it was nineteen fathoms deep and a quarter of a league wide, as was said when they sounded it in order to cast into it the body of the governor and adelantado Hernando de Soto. Those who claim to understand something of cosmography say that it was three hundred leagues from where they embarked to the source of the river, and others say many more. I accept the smaller number, so that it would give the river a course of eight hundred leagues to the sea, and these Spaniards went all that distance into the interior of the country.[44]

[44]In interpreting this comment, it will be noted that the Spaniards evidently deduced that the Tennessee River, encountered in the area of Chiaha, was an upper course of the Río Grande, i.e., the Mississippi. Biedma, for example, calls the Tennessee River at Chiaha the "River of Espíritu Santo," which since the days of Pineda's coastal exploration had been considered the primary drainage along the northern Gulf Coast. The chronicles of the later Tristán de Luna expedition call it the same thing. See also the configuration of the Tennessee River on the so-called De Soto Map in Swanton, *Final Report*, 343.

When God is pleased for that land to be won, they will find out by going by way of this river how far our people went from the sea. For the present I cannot verify this account further than I have done already, and it has been a great deal [of effort] even to bring to light this little after so many years have passed and [from the accounts of] people whose purpose was not to go through the land marking out its confines, though they were discovering it, but to seek gold and silver. Therefore I may be admitted here the excuse that I have given elsewhere for other deficiencies in this *History* with regard to cosmography. I should have liked to write it very fully to give a better and more complete notice of that country, because my principal intent in this labor of mine, which has not been small, has been none other than to give an account to my lord the king and to the commonwealth of Spain of what the Spaniards themselves have discovered so nearby, so that they would not allow their predecessors' labors to be lost but would be encouraged and animated to win and settle a kingdom so large and so fertile.[45] First of all [they should do this] for the augmentation of the Catholic faith, for there is a large field that can be sown among people who, because of the few heathen abuses and ceremonies that they would have to abandon, are disposed to receive it with facility. The Spaniards are obligated to this preaching more than are the other Catholic nations, since God in His mercy elected them to preach his gospel in the New World and they are already its rulers. It would be a great affront and insult if other peoples should win them ahead of us, even though it were for this same purpose of preaching.

Furthermore, almost all the nations who are our neighbors being, as they are, infected with the abominable heresies of these unhappy times, it is greatly to be feared that they may sow it among those peoples who are so simple, managing to make an establishment among them, as they have already attempted to do.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, and His spouse the Roman church, our Mother and Lady, having given us the seed of the truth and the faculty and power for disseminating it, as has been done for 110 years in these parts and as is being done in the most and the better part of the New World, it would be a count and charge against the Spanish nation if now, through its carelessness and because it has fallen asleep, the enemy should sow discord in this great kingdom of La Florida, so important a part of the New World, which is hers.

[45]By the time this was written, apparently unknown to Garcilaso, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés had long since founded permanent colonial outposts in La Florida, including St. Augustine. In Book I, Chapter IV, Garcilaso excuses himself for his imperfect knowledge of the exploits of that individual.

Aside from what is due religion, the Spaniards of today ought, especially for their own honor and profit, to make an effort to conquer this empire, where there are such broad, extensive, and fertile lands, so well adapted for human life as we have seen. It is not possible that the gold and silver mines that are so desired would not be found if they were sought for systematically, for since they have not been lacking in any province of the New World, neither would they be absent here. While they were being discovered, it would be possible to enjoy the wealth of pearls, so plentiful, large, and fine as we have told; and to produce silk, facilities for which we have noted in the large number of mulberry trees; and to raise and prepare for use all kinds of cattle, there could not be desired more-abundant pasturage or more-fertile lands than this country contains.

For all of this we pray that the Lord may animate these Spaniards so that they will not be careless regarding this region nor relax their good intentions, since in all the rest of the New World they are discovering and conquering every day new kingdoms and provinces more difficult to win than those of La Florida. For entering and conquering it, navigation from Spain is easy. The same ship can make two voyages a year. Horses can be had throughout the whole country of México, where they are plentiful and very good. For assistance, if it should be needed, they could apply to the islands of Cuba and Santo Domingo and those near them, and to New Spain and Tierra Firme, and with the facilities afforded by the Río Grande, which would accommodate any fleet, they could ascend by way of it easily whenever they liked. For my own part I say that if the Lord had given me the wealth in accordance with my will and desire, I would spend it joyfully, along with my life, in this heroic enterprise. But this must wait for some more fortunate person, for he who does it will be such, and then the errors of my *History*, for which I have so often asked pardon, will be corrected. With this let us return to it, for in my concern and desire to see it finished I have not shirked the labor that is intolerable to me, nor spared my poor health, which is now very feeble, nor let anything else stand in my way, so that Spain, to which I owe so much, may not be without this account if I should die before publishing it.